

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
AID-05 SSC-01 EB-08 COME-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SIL-01
LAB-04 /088 W

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R 102106Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1192
INFO AMCONSUL BELIZE
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEGUCIGALPA 3808

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, MPOL, PINR, HO
SUBJ: NEW CABINET MINISTERS

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 3771

1. SUMMARY: NEW CABINET MINISTERS INCLUDE TWO MILITARY OFFICERS, TWO VICE MINISTERS FROM MELGAR CABINET WHO MOVED UP, AND TWO HIGHLY REGARDED CIVILIANS WHO ARE RETURNING TO SAME PORTFOLIO THEY HELD IN PREVIOUS REGIMES. TWO WELL KNOWN RADIO PERSONALITIES HAVE BEEN APPOINTED TO NON-CABINET POSTS. ON BALANCE, NEW APPOINTMENTS WELL RECEIVED. END SUMMARY.

2. DEFENSE.

DIEGO ARTURO LANDA CELANO, LT.COL. BORN 1942 IN PUERTO CORTES. ENTERED ARMY IN 1957. SERVED AS CHIEF OF OPERATIONS, SECOND INFANTRY BATTALION, ATTENDED VARIOUS TRAINING COURSES IN CANAL
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ZONE, INCLUDING GUERRILA WARFARE. PROMOTED TO LT.COL. 1973. COMMANDED 5TH, 7TH, AND 12TH BATTALIONS. COMES NOW FROM LATTER POSITION AT SANTA ROSA DE COPAN, CONSIDERED UNDESIRABLE MILITARY POSTING. (DEFENSE MINISTRY POST NOT GENERALLY REGARDED AS PROMOTION). AVERAGE OFFICER, PERSONABLE, AND FRIENDLY TO AMERICAN CONTACTS.

3. GOVERNMENT AND JUSTICE.

CRISTOBAL DIAZ GARCIA, LT.COL. BORN 1934. ENTERED ARMY 1953. 1964-65 ATTENDED INTERNATIONAL POLICE ACADEMY IN WASHINGTON. PROMOTED TO LT.COL. 1973. COMMANDED 1ST MIL ZONE CHOLUTECA 1974. WAS MILITARY ATTACHE IN MANAGUA 1975, PRIOR TO BEING NAMED SUB-SECRETARY (I.E., VICE MINISTER) OF GOVERNMENT AND JUSTICE IN LAST CABINET. CAREER HAS BEEN MORE IN STAFF THAN COMMAND POSITIONS, THUS LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL NOT WELL KNOWN OR YET DEMONSTRATED.

4. EDUCATION.

EUGENIO MATUTE CONIZALES, DR. BORN 1912 IN YORO. RECEIVED MEDICAL DEGREE FROM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF HONDURAS WHERE HE SUBSEQUENTLY TAUGHT. ELECTED AS NATIONAL PARTY DEPUTY TO CONGRESS 1957 IN WHICH HE EFFECTIVELY CHAMPIONED TEACHERS' CAUSES. SERVED AS MINISTER OF EDUCATION 1963-65. AMBASSADOR TO ITALY 1965-70 AND ELECTED ONE OF THREE PRESIDENTIAL DESIGNATES (I.E., VICE PRESIDENTS) OF HONDURAS IN 1971 ON NATIONAL PARTY SLATE (HE HAD ALSO BEEN CONSIDERED AS PARTY'S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE). POPULAR WITH TEACHERS, ANTI-COMMUNIST, HIGHLY REGARDED AS MAN OF PRINCIPLES. MOST RECENT POSITION HAS BEEN AMBASSADOR TO GUATEMALA.

5. PUBLIC HEALTH.

LUIS A. COUSSIN BOGRAN, DR. BORN SAN PEDRO SULA ABOUT 1928. PART
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BELGIAN. HAS BEEN CIVILIAN DOCTOR TO ARMED FORCES IN SAN PEDRO SULA AREA, WHICH APPARENTLY EXPLAINS HIS SELECTION OVER REGULAR MILITARY PHYSICIAN FOR POST. MEMBER OF WEALTHY BOGRAN FAMILY IN SAN PEDRO SULA. OTHERWISE UNKNOWN IN NATIONAL POLITICS.

6. CULTURE AND TOURISM.

ARMANDO ALVAREZ. BORN ABOUT 1936. ACTIVE IN NATIONAL PARTY YOUTH GROUPS AS LAW STUDENT AT NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF HONDURAS. WORKED FOR TROPICAL RADIO TELEGRAPH (A UNITED BRANDS SUBSIDIARY) AND HELD SEVERAL DIPLOMATIC POSITIONS IN LATIN AMERICA BEFORE BECOMING SUB-SECRETARY (I.E., VICE MINISTER) OF CULTURE AND TOURISM IN PREVIOUS CABINET. VERY PRO-AMERICAN AND PERSONAL FRIEND OF LAST PAO. BROTHER OF LT.COL. GUSTAVO ALVAREZ, NOW THIRD BATTALION COMMANDER IN SAN PEDRO SULA AND COUSIN OF JUNTA MEMBER LT. COL. DOMINGO ALVAREZ CRUZ.

7. SUPERIOR ECONOMIC PLANNING COUNCIL (CONSUPLANE).

VALENTIN DE JESUS MENDOZA. BORN 1930 IN VALLE. GRADUATE UNIVERSITY OF HONDURAS WHERE HE SUBSEQUENTLY SERVED ON ECONOMICS FACULTY, RISING TO ACTING DEAN IN 1963. PRESIDENT OF HONDURAN

COLLEGE OF ECONOMISTS 1962-64. VICE MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND HOUSING 1967. DIRECTOR, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC PLANNING 1968. MANAGER CENTRAL BANK OF HONDURAS 1973. HEADED HONDURAN DELEGATION TO NUMEROUS TECHNICAL MEETINGS OF UN AND REGIONAL BODIES DEALING WITH ECONOMIC SEMINARS AND AUTHOR OF LARGE NUMBER OF ARTICLES ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. NATIONAL PARTY MEMBER. MOST RECENT POSITION HAS BEEN IN MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES WHERE HE HAS WORKED EFFECTIVELY ON CERTAIN AID SECTOR PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES.

8. PERSONAL ADVISER TO JUNTA.

GUSTAVO ACOSTA MEJIA. BORN 1923 IN LA CEIBA. GRADUATE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF HONDURAS LAW SCHOOL. WELL KNOWN, OUTSPOKEN RADIO CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMENTATOR AND LAWYER. WHILE HIS INDEPENDENCE HAS ENDEARED HIM TO LARGE GRASS ROOTS AUDIENCE OVER YEARS, IT HAS ALSO NETTED HIM ONE JAIL TERM AND ANOTHER PERIOD WHEN HE WAS BANNED FROM THE AIR WAVES. GOH CONSUL GENERAL IN NEW YORK 1972. NATIONAL PARTY MEMBER AND BROTHER OF IRMA ACOSTA DE FORTIN, NATIONAL PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE PRESIDENT.

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9. DIRECTOR OF PRESS RELATIONS.

HERMAN ALLAN PADGETT VALASQUEZ. BORN 1936 IN EL PRAISO. GRAD-
ATED 1959 FROM NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CULTURE IN TEGUCIGALPA.
EXTENSIVE FOREIGN TRAVEL, SPEAKS ENGLISH. HAS PROFESSIONAL EXPER-
IENCE IN BUSINESS AND LAW AS WELL AS JOURNALISM. SERVED AS LIBERAL
DEPUTY IN CONGRESS 1965-72. NOW MEMBER OF INNOVATION AND UNITY
PARTY (PINU).

10. COMMENT: NEW APPOINTMENTS TO EDUCATION AND CONSUPLANE ARE
CONSIDERED DEFINITE IMPROVEMENTS OVER UNPOPULAR AND/OR INEFFECTIVE
PREDECESSORS. ALSO, THEY ARE BOTH RETURNING TO POSITIONS HELD IN
FORMER GOVERNMENT AND IN WHICH THEY HAD PERFORMED EFFECTIVELY.
AT MINISTRIES OF GOVERNMENT-JUSTICE AND CULTURE-TOURISM VICE
MINISTERS JUST MOVED UP ONE NOTCH AND NO MAJOR POLICY CHANGES
CAN BE EXPECTED. PUBLIC HEALTH MINISTER IS NEWCOMER, BUT REGARDED
AS COMPETENT IN HIS PROFESSION. NEW DEFENSE MINISTER CAN BE EX-
PECTED NOT TO MAKE ANY WAVES WHILE HOLDING DOWN THAT POSITION
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FOR ARMED FORCES SUPERIOR COUNCIL. ACOSTA AND PADGETT APPOINT-
MENTS PROVIDE NEEDED PUBLIC RELATIONS AND RECOGNITION FACTOR
TO NEW GOVERNMENT. ONE SURPRISE HOLDOVER IS LABOR MINISTER DISCUA,
WHOSE UNPOPULARITY WAS ONLY SLIGHT LESS THAN PREVIOUS EDUCATION
MINISTER AND WHO OWED POSITION TO HIS LAW PARTNER CESAR BATRES,
WHO DEPARTED WITH MELGAR. IN SUM, APPOINTMENTS REFLECT CONTINUATION
OF BASIC POLICIES AND APPARENT RECOGNITION OF NEED FOR BROADER
PUBLIC SUPPORT AND TO GIVE REASSURANCE TO INTERNATIONAL LENDING
AGENCIES.
JARAMILLO

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